2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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This small sample is typical of the relationships that unite neighbours at Datɔk. The settlement is divided up into such clusters of homesteads, numbering anything from four or five homesteads to about a dozen, which have grown up around the homestead of a man who migrated to settle there forty or fifty years ago when Datɔk was still uninhabited bush.

Gradually the original settlers were joined by younger members of their lineages and kinsmen, migrating for economic or psychological reasons but drawn to this particular place by their kinship ties. Often several such clusters of homesteads close to one another, the owners of which are linked among themselves by ties of lineage or kinship, are grouped round men who are themselves linked by lineage or kinship. They are the original settlers, or more usually the sons or grandsons of the original settlers, who built their homesteads far apart from one another so as to have ample land for cultivation close at hand, and then 'cut' (*ŋma*) parcels of this land for the immigrants who filtered in subsequently.

In these conditions a great deal of intermarriage takes place between neighbours and within the local community, since many different clans are represented in the community. Tallensi are more inclined to marry people who live nearby than to take spouses from a distance; and at Datɔk marriage between the children of men who happen to be neighbours because of their kinship with a third man, but are themselves not related, is very common.[1] This weaves the mesh of kinship ties yet more finely, binding neighbour to neighbour still more closely and firmly.

It is evident that the corporate life of a community like Datɔk—and this applies only in a lesser degree to other peripheral settlements of mixed origins—must differ in many ways from that of the older settlements. Two clans, Gar and Gban, are numerically and politically dominant at Datɔk, just as Zoo is at Biuŋ, and the Hill Talis are at Mɔyaduur, and the people of these numerically superior clans or lineages can co-operate and unite for action in the same way as the segments of the clan do in the old settlements. People who have very few or no clansmen or lineage brothers in the settlement are in a different position. In Tale jural and ceremonial relations all matters of importance are dealt with corporately by lineages. Thus, if a Ba'ari man living at Datɔk suffers a bereavement, takes a wife, marries off a daughter, gets involved in a dispute, or has to make an important sacrifice, he has to call upon the elders of his lineage and clan at Ba'ari to support him in the action required. His extra-clan kinsmen at Datɔk cannot give him corporate assistance, though they would be individually helpful. Similarly he takes part in the economic, jural, and ceremonial events in which his Datɔk neighbours and kinsmen are involved only as an individual actuated by ties of personal kinship and concern for the welfare of particular people. In other words, these outlying settlements are still politically inchoate. They are still mainly social and political apanages of the older settlements from which they have been colonized; very many of their members are still tied into the structure of their natal clan-settlements, and are still

[1] I state this in a general way, as I did not take a sufficiently large sample of marriages at Datɔk to give a numerical indication of the extent of marriage within the settlement.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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A striking illustration of this antithesis occurred at a sacrifice that Diŋkaha made to one of his ancestors. An ambitious and none too scrupulous braggart of considerable intelligence and drive, Diŋkaha had been very useful to me and had made the most of his connexion with me. One of the objects of this ceremony was to show off his friendship with me to his clansmen, and his prestige among them to me. It was, therefore, a specially lavish occasion. In the middle of the ceremony Diŋkaha's father-in-law called in. The old man was respectfully received and ushered into his daughter's rooms. Diŋkaha finished the sacrifice and began to distribute the meat. Various members of his lineage and clan received the portions due to them. And then, intoxicated with conceit at having his white friend in his house and at the obvious appreciation of his stock, in consequence, in the eyes of his clansmen, a rash impulse overcame him. Holding up a goat's foreleg—one of the ritually prescribed portions that should be reserved for those entitled by birth to share in the sacrifice—he launched out into a speech, the gist of which was that he desired his father-in-law to accept it in order to mark this special occasion. A sombre look came upon the old man's face. He was visibly shocked. Speaking gravely but curtly, he refused the gift. *Deenam*, he said, do not sacrifice together; it is an unheard-of thing; he could not accept the gift. Diŋkaha retired in discomfiture behind a smoke-screen of apologies.

Marriage implies the absence of kinship ties between the parties; kinship, the impossibility of marriage. Kinship ties exist in their own right; *deen* is an artificial alliance of a contractual nature. The parties to a marriage deliberately and voluntarily enter into a bond, the bride's guardian permitting her to marry in return for a promise on the part of the bridegroom's guardian to pay him four head of cattle. Kinship ties are not voluntary and are automatically binding. The parties to a marriage are bound by rights and duties which did not exist before. Kinship automatically entails moral, jural, and ritual bonds, whereas there is an avowed element of mutual coercion, and therefore potential tension, in the relations of in-laws. They rely upon a special, impartial jural instrument, the bride-price, for the adjustment of their rival claims on the woman.

Tallensi think of *deen* as a relationship for ever fraught with the possibility of conflict over these claims. Nearly all their litigation nowadays, like much inter-clan fighting in former days, concerns bride-price debts or the rival claims over a woman or her children of father-in-law and son-in-law. Such quarrels are incompatible with kinship. They would cut to pieces the solidarity of kinsfolk—that is why, say the Tallensi, kinsfolk do not marry. *Dɔŋam*, in short, presupposes some degree of identification of the parties concerned, mutual or common interests, and especially a bond of amity that excludes strife which might fix a permanent gulf between them.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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Within the joint family, though its members maintain a very intimate association with one another, make free of one anothers' possessions, and go freely in and out of every woman's quarters, each woman and her children are ensured a certain amount of privacy in their own *dug*. Husband and wife form a precisely distinguished unit. They have complete privacy in their sexual relations and a great deal of privacy in other relations. It would be the grossest breach of manners for anyone but their own infant child to intrude on a man and his wife in their own sleeping-room.

In their own home, therefore, a family has much privacy. A man can confide in his wife or his son things that he does not want others to know about—things about his debts, his property, or his ritual possessions. He can talk over with them problems concerning the household or matters of public import. There are ritual activities, such as sacrifices to a medicine shrine, in which only a man and his sons or the members of the joint family share. Sometimes such domestic secrets have to be divulged, especially after a man's death. It may be necessary to clear up a question of a debt he owed or to carry out special rites for one of his medicine shrines. But until then they are usually faithfully guarded. The Talaŋa can keep his own counsel if need be.

The Significance of Marriage[1]

As the preceding chapters suggest, Tale domestic relations do not remain perpetually fixed. They change and develop with the years. At one time the ties of economic co-operation, of reciprocal sentiment and mutual loyalties, of reciprocal and shared rights and duties, are uppermost; at another the underlying cleavages and competing interests push through. This appears very clearly in the relations of husband and wife, the central pillar of the domestic organization. We shall discuss the marital relationship in some detail, for it is a nodal relationship in Tale social life. It is not only the starting-point of the family, but the starting-point of the kinship ties that run across and between genealogically independent clans and lineages. Through marriage the mutually exclusive corporate units of Tale society become interlaced with one another.

The Tallensi regard marriage as the normal state of life for every adult. They cannot conceive of anyone voluntarily refraining from marriage throughout life. There is something wrong, by native standards, with men and women who never marry; and they are few. In the whole of Tongo I knew only five men who had never been married and who would, according to common belief, never marry. One was obviously mentally defective; another was an invert; two were said to be so ugly that no woman would accept them, but both were also definitely unbalanced and eccentric; and the last was a gentle old man, who, it was

[1] A preliminary account of Tale marriage customs is given in my pamphlet, *Marriage Law among the Tallensi*, Government Press, Gold Coast, 1935.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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581 said, had never had the enterprise to find a wife. I heard of no woman
589 who had never married. Deformities which do not wholly incapacitate a person or arouse repulsion are not a bar to marriage. The blind, the deaf, and the lame find spouses if they are otherwise able-bodied and presentable.

Tallensi attach immense importance to marriage, not only because it is the sole means to the most ardently desired of all ends, the procreation of legitimate children, but also because no man or woman can adequately satisfy all his or her wants or lead a normal social life, after reaching maturity, without a spouse. Sooner or later a man must have a wife and a woman a husband. Hence 'finding a wife (*poya booga*)' is the most urgent preoccupation of unmarried men, apart from getting a living. Among unmarried young men it is an obsession, the most absorbing pursuit of their leisure and an interminable topic of conversation. A girl's life is entirely directed towards marriage from childhood onwards.

581 It is a common thing to find a group of men discussing the relative
181 importance of farms and wives, the two basic practical interests of the natives. They seldom fail to come down to the fundamentals. I have heard an elder sum it up somewhat in this fashion: 'If you don't farm you will have no food; and if you have no food you die. Then what is the use of a wife without food? But if you have no wife you will have no children and your life is wasted.' In the end, however, it is usually agreed that farming is the more important, for the man who lives long enough will not lack a wife and without food one cannot support a family.

556 Land and wives have many features in common, as their juxtaposition in native thought shows. Both stand for the fulfilment of fundamental social needs. Both come under the jurisdiction of the lineage, though they are of direct service to individuals. But there are certain differences which show the special importance of wives. There is no intense competition for the possession of land. Owing to technical and economic limitations there is no inducement to accumulate land. Wealth—that is, property acquired by saving, or in exchange for surplus grain or cash—consists pre-eminently of livestock; and the use to which livestock is principally put is in acquiring wives, performing sacrifices, celebrating funerals, and, to a much lesser extent, competing for certain politico-ritual offices. Such wealth is, therefore, really equivalent to provision for delayed consumption or special forms of consumption arising out of ritual obligations or differences in status.[1] It has no durable productive value. Compared with livestock, the purchase of farm-land is insignificant

[1] But Tale standards of wealth are extremely low. Except for a handful of chiefs and headmen—who have herds of cattle numbering from 20 to 50, and, in at least one case, apparently, over 100, as well as numbers of small stock—a man with a dozen sheep, a few goats, and three or four head of cattle is considered to be wealthy (*bondaan*).

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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as a form of investment, if such it can be called. Indeed, over most of Taleland the buying and selling of farm-land is ritually prohibited.[1] Occasionally disputes arise between the heirs when farm-lands pass by inheritance. But these rare quarrels are considered to be despicable and are ascribed to idiosyncrasies of character. In any case they are quarrels over the apportionment of joint property and there is always the chance that the man who has come off worst will later inherit the very land he was deprived of.

It is the exact contrary with wives. They form the chief object of competition both between individuals and between corporate groups. This is explicitly admitted in the conventions ruling the abduction of wives and marriage with another man's ex-wife.[2] The prohibition against abducting the wife (or marrying an ex-wife) of a clansman, kinsman, or member of a locally contiguous clan admits the fact that such acts are the most prolific source of strife, leading, in the old days, to bloodshed at times. The corollary that it is permissible, nay, commendable, to abduct the wife of a member of a distant, unrelated clan is an expression of the idea that geographically distant and genealogically unconnected clans have no direct common interests.

Competition for wives always was and still is the chief source of conflict between individuals and groups in Taleland. More than 90 per cent. of all cases brought to chiefs' courts nowadays are concerned with wives, and they are always triangular affairs with two men competing for the woman or her offspring. The reason for this competitive attitude about wives in a society almost devoid of durable goods of great productive or prestige value and possessing few prestige-conferring offices is not difficult to see, as has been previously indicated. Wives are the sole means of attaining the supreme end of life for the natives, the perpetuation and increase of a man's lineage. Like land, which is a common interest to the whole nuclear and often inner lineage, wives are of common interest to all the members of their husbands' lineages (not only their inner lineages, but even their maximal lineages and clans), for all of whom the perpetuation of their line of descent is of transcendent importance. This idea, which is expressed in the principle of the levirate, lies behind many of the institutions we shall be considering in this chapter.

Tallensi maintain that marriageable young women have become much scarcer than a generation ago. They blame the chiefs and headmen, whose new-found wealth enables them to have large harems, thus robbing young men of possible wives. Tallensi say that girls naturally prefer to marry young men, who are more congenial to them sexually and socially, rather than old men, however prosperous or exalted they may be. But a girl cannot easily resist an offer of marriage from a chief

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xi.
[2] Ibid., ch. iv.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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or headman or important elder, backed as it often is by lavish gifts to her parents, security of the bride-price, and the attraction of his wealth and power or status. Few parents would hesitate to force their daughter to accept such an offer. Chiefs and headmen do in fact have an excessive number of wives. The five biggest chiefs and headmen of the Tongo district had between them about 160 wives of all ages in 1936. Their predecessors of a generation ago would have had perhaps 30 between them, at the utmost. The extra 130 wives they have means that probably 100 other men have been cheated of wives. This has no doubt diminished the chances of early marriage for a proportion of young men, but not so greatly as the men assert. All the evidence of Tale domestic institutions and of Tale genealogies goes to show that wives were always highly prized because they were always at a premium.[1] In consequence, no unmarried girl or woman of child-bearing age lacks suitors, and no wife of child-bearing age need endure an intolerable marriage. She can always find another husband. That women take advantage of their scarcity value is what one would expect; but they do so to a smaller extent than one anticipates. This is due partly to the strength and stability of the patrilineal lineage system, expressed in inter-personal relations in the power of the *patria potestas*, and partly to the great value women set upon wifehood and motherhood. Life is a failure to a Tale woman who never becomes a wife and mother.

The Stability of Marriage

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In consequence, partly, of the scarcity value of wives, but more, no doubt, of the conflict of loyalties and interests which has to be overcome, marriage tends to be unstable in the initial stages. A young man rarely settles down permanently with his first bride, and young women generally treat their first marriage as an experiment unless the husband is a much older man to whom they have been married by formal negotiation. In the course of collecting census material I noted the marriages of over a hundred men. There is not one man over the age of 30, approximately (excluding a few physically or psychologically abnormal men), who has failed to experience one or more unsuccessful and usually short-lived marriages. Most men of 30 to 40 can give a history of five

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[1] I have no demographic evidence suggesting that there was formerly or is now a marked deficiency of marriageable women as compared with men in Taleland. My own crude demographic inquiries suggest a sex ratio of about unity among the Tallensi. Polygynous marriage, therefore, inevitably means competition for wives, even though women are usually married by the age of 16 or 17, as near as one can guess, and men rarely succeed in finding a wife before the age of about 25. The natives maintain that the age of marriage for girls has been decreasing rapidly since the coming of the white man (cf. my paper, 'A Note on Fertility among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast', *Sociological Review*, xxv, 1943, 3–4).

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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or six abortive—or rather, to translate the native attitude into our own terms, experimental—marriages. Men of over 50 say, with a laugh, that they cannot remember all the women they have married who left them after a short time. Women are more discreet about their marital history; but observation leads to the conclusion that between 50 and 60 per cent. of all married women have had more than one husband.[1]

A marriage breaks up either through the action of one of the spouses, generally the woman, or through that of the wife's guardian. The Tallensi have no formal procedure for divorce. If a man wishes to get rid of a wife (which happens very seldom) he generally does so by withholding the bride-price, so that her guardian eventually recalls her, or he makes her life so uncomfortable that she deserts him. If a woman decides to leave a husband, she simply absconds. She may do so because she dislikes him, or because he does not feed her well enough, or neglects her sexually or otherwise, or, natives say, out of mere caprice. All women, according to the men, are fickle and gullible; a plausible suitor can seduce any woman. So if a young wife goes to visit her parents and stays longer than two or three days, her husband, be he an ardent young man or a sober greybeard, hurries off to fetch her, usually in considerable dudgeon, for fear that she may be abducted by another man.

Despite these initial pitfalls of marriage, families do get established and remain stable. Though the idea of marriage as a lifelong and irrevocable bond does not exist among the Tallensi, many couples do settle down for life, and many other couples remain united for a long enough stretch of years to produce one or more children.

Many complicated circumstances have an influence on this. Naturally, the jural formalities must be properly complied with. That is to say,

[1] Many of these experimental marriages are not marriages at all, according to the strict letter of custom, since they are sometimes dissolved before placation gifts have been made and often before any instalment of the bride-price has been paid. Some last only a few weeks. But they are always called marriages; for it is a fact that many marriages that begin in exactly this way do turn out to be stable in the end. Counting as 'wives' only those for whom bride-price was paid and who bore children to their husbands, I found, among a randomly chosen group of 20 men over 45, approximately, that only 2 had had 1 wife each; only 3 had had 2 wives each; the remaining 15 (= 75 per cent.) had all had more than 2 wives each. Altogether, these 20 men had had 71 wives (average 3·5 wives each); they had lost 21 (average 1 each) by death; and at the time of the census they had 45 wives (average 2·25 each). But most of them claimed to have 'married' from 10 to 20 times and were able to give a fairly complete history of these abortive 'marriages'.

Among a randomly chosen group of 20 women of child-bearing age—who were therefore not yet at the end of their matrimonial careers—6 (= 30 per cent.) had had only one husband each; 7 (= 35 per cent.) had had only 2 husbands each; the remaining 7 (= 35 per cent.) had had more than 2 husbands each, 4 of them having had more than 3 husbands each. Apart from the propensity to choose a final husband by trial and error, the custom of the levirate helps to increase the number of husbands a woman may have in her lifetime.

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the bridegroom's guardian must send the placation gift (*lu sendaan*) to the bride's guardian, and must pay a proportion of the bride-price acceptable to the latter. A wife is usually espoused (*sol*) by paying the bride-price of four head of cattle or their equivalent in instalments over a number of years. If he does not fulfil these jural requirements, a man has no rights to and over his wife. On the other hand, women frequently desert husbands who have paid a part or, occasionally, even the whole bride-price. In such a case an honourable man may feel bound to compel his daughter to return to her husband, but if the girl refuses obstinately he may have to yield to her. Often, however, a father prefers his daughter to find another husband from whom he claims the bride-price that has to be refunded to the first husband. And it is not uncommon for men to instigate a daughter to leave her lawful husband for another man, or to take a daughter away from her husband and give her to another man as a means of raising what we should call ready cash or its equivalent—for instance, a cow to repay a pressing debt, or to buy grain for the household. Thus, observance of the jural proprieties gives a husband a weapon with which he can try to assert his rights to and over his wife. It does not give him an absolute guarantee of these rights nor does it ensure the stability of the marriage.

A girl's parents, and especially her father, can make or mar a marriage. Young people may wed without their fathers' consent, but they cannot remain legitimately married without it. If a man objects to a son-in-law he usually succeeds in exercising his right to take his daughter away, though cases are numerous in which the woman has persistently returned to the rejected husband, who has had to be accepted in the end. By contrast, if a father has himself chosen or likes his daughter's husband, he is a strong ally. He can force the girl, beating her if necessary, to stay with her husband, though here again fathers have been known to fail with obdurate daughters. Generally, however, the strength of paternal authority makes a father's command irresistible; for he might curse an intractable daughter, and this is greatly dreaded.

Again, a woman will not stay with a husband who does not pay at least a portion of the bride-price. It is an insult to her, placing her on the level of a casual lover and exposing her to the taunts of her co-wives of the lineage. Pukiehat's wife was taken from him five times because he could not pay anything towards her bride-price; every time she came back. At length her guardian brought a case against Pukiehat. The chief put it to her that Pukiehat was, in effect, treating both her and her guardian with contempt. Sadly she admitted this and agreed to leave him if he did not meet the debt at once. Pukiehat saw he was in danger of losing his wife. He was a poor man; but he set to work energetically and managed to raise the equivalent of two cows, which was enough to satisfy his father-in-law.

Even a fruitful marriage, the strongest of all bonds between husband

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and wife, may suffer shipwreck. Many women leave a husband or are taken from him after bearing one child to him. Only after a woman has borne two or three living children to a man does this bond become a really effective force in maintaining the marriage.

The real foundation of a lasting marriage is not custom or jural or ritual sanctions, but a satisfactory relationship between the married pair; and this is a complex tissue woven of many strands, changing and strengthening with the years. It has elements that can be translated into terms of reciprocal rights, duties, and services. But it is essentially a moral and personal bond, a question of the mutual adjustment of roles and persons in pursuit of the interests married partners have in one another and in common, and the purposes they share. The sexual bond is of vital importance in this relationship.

The personality of a spouse is important. A lazy man who neglects to provide for his wife sufficiently, a harsh man who strikes her at the least provocation, a man who through sickness, impotence, or lack of consideration does not or will not give her sexual satisfaction, yet holds her jealously to her marital fidelity; any such man may find it hard to keep a wife. A lazy woman, a disobedient woman, a woman with a hasty temper or one who is a confirmed gadabout, is likely to have several husbands before she finally settles down. A barren woman, too, with her growing sense of frustration as the years pass, tends to become restless and to drift from husband to husband. Such a one is Gelima, Naabdiya's elderly sister, who has tried no fewer than eighteen husbands and has been compelled to seek a haven for her declining years in her brother's home. Barrenness is one of the reasons for which a man may decide to get rid of a wife, but often enough a barren wife who is a good worker and has a tractable disposition gains her husband's devotion and remains with him. Occasionally a wife proves to be a petty thief, who filches the supplies of other women of the household or stores put aside by the men. She will get short shrift, and will be sent back in disgrace, formally, by the head of her husband's *dug*; for such a person is bound to cause endless disturbance in the family. A woman accused of witchcraft by a co-wife may be dealt with similarly, it is said, but in the few cases I have heard of the husbands have not divorced the women. Lastly, no man will tolerate a wife who suffers from nocturnal enuresis, however attractive or proficient she may be. To urinate on the sleeping-mat during sleep is a grave mystical offence endangering the life of the husband; hence, a woman suffering from this complaint is formally sent back to her parents.

The Wife's Ties with Her Paternal Family and Lineage

These accidents of personality affect only a minority of marriages. The constant social factors that steer the course of every marriage are of greater significance to us, and must be examined more fully. When

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that prenuptial love affairs between adolescents have diminished since the coming of the white man, owing to increasing scarcity of marriageable girls and the consequent decline in the age of marriage for them. Premarital motherhood, on the other hand, they regard with a certain amount of scorn. It suggests a weakness of character, but it is not so disgraceful as to spoil the girl's chances of marriage.

The norms of kinship and marriage indirectly lead to prenuptial love affairs and adultery occurring mostly between distantly related members of the same clan. Such amours, whether casual or lasting, are not considered to be incestuous. That the parties are members of the same clan does not arouse public disapprobation, nor does it bring down ritual penalties on their heads or set jural sanctions in motion against them. This makes it seem the more inappropriate to pick out the sexual tie as the corner-stone of marriage. For, as we have previously indicated, the social relations of affinity arising out of marriage are always sharply contrasted with those of kinship; and if sex relations are the essential thing in marriage they must surely be incompatible with kinship. The paradox is resolved if we take into account certain principles of kinship that will be elucidated later. It is of interest here as evidence of the distinction, characteristic of Tale ideas about sex, which the natives draw clearly between sexual relations as a mode of sensual gratification and sexual intercourse in marriage.

Tallensi often cite the maxim 'Copulation and marriage are not the same thing (*Pɛn nyɛbɔg ni pɔɣadir, ba ka bu kɔ'la*)'. But they also say, 'We marry for the sake of copulation'; always adding, however, 'and for the sake of children'. The sexual motive, in short, is considered to be fundamental to marriage, both for men and for women; but it is fundamental as the means to the supreme end of marriage, the procreation of children.

The Economic and Property Relations of Spouses

The significance of sex in marriage will be clearer if we consider first the economic and property relations of husband and wife. By marriage a woman is transferred from her father's authority to that of her husband, and, consequently, to that of anyone under whose authority he comes. Explaining this, Tallensi say, 'A man owns (*so*) his wife. Has he not bought (*da*) her?' This does not mean that a wife is regarded as a chattel. In fact no man would dare to say in his wife's presence that he bought her, except in jest, in an outburst of violent anger, or deliberately to insult her. The concept 'own' here means that a man has authority over and is responsible for his wife. He 'owns' her working power, in the first place. She must perform the indispensable domestic tasks connected with the preparation of food for the household, the provision of water-supplies, the care of the home and of the children, and so forth. She must help him with the sowing and the harvesting of his crops,

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581 593 which cannot be done without the assistance of women. He can command other services from her. For instance, nowadays he can send her to buy grain for him in distant markets and sell it for him in the home market; and he can ask for many little services that make life more comfortable for him. A man has a right to these services; but it is a right limited by the principle of reciprocity.[1] In return a man is bound to protect and care for his wife, in particular to provide her with a home, with food, and with curative treatment if she is ill.

593 592 There is an obvious material basis for the economic reciprocity of husband and wife. Primarily it is a function of the system of economic co-operation, by means of which the household satisfies its material wants. The head of the family owns the land and the livestock from which all draw their sustenance. The men do the heavy work of farming and care for the livestock. The women perform the tasks already mentioned. Within this subsistence unit the rule of reciprocity of economic rights and duties governs the economic relations of parent and child, of brother and brother, as well as those of husband and wife. For it is an application of the wider principle that all those who pool their labour in the common task of providing food and shelter for the household are entitled, severally, to a just share in the product of their common labour.

593 421 The authority of husband over wife in the matter of economic duties and services is tempered, also, by a principle that really follows as a logical corollary upon the principle just stated. The products of individual industry and enterprise belong to the individual, subject to the nominal over-right of anyone who has authority over him or her, in particular, of the head of the family. The rule applies to all property relations between the members of the family. Thus, as soon as a wife acquires a *dug* of her own she begins to have a certain degree of economic autonomy, and this increases with the passage of time, as her children become more and more able to do without her regular care. She has her own vegetable plot allocated to her by her husband. She often has a ground-nut plot of her own, which she cultivates herself. She has her small private store of grain, obtained by gift from her father or brothers or other kinsmen. Her vegetables, her ground-nuts, and her grain do not go into the pool of family resources. They do, however, serve to supplement these resources; for it is a woman's duty to provide the vegetable food, and it would be unthinkable for her not to use other supplies she may possess to feed her children and her husband in time of scarcity. But if her private supplies are not required for this purpose she can dispose of them as she pleases. She can exchange them for money or goods, or use them to give hospitality to her own kin or guests. The same rule holds for such things as shea fruit and shea butter, which [437] it is a woman's duty to provide for the household. Thus, it is common for women to barter surplus shea nuts for household utensils, and these are entirely their own property.

[1] Cf. p. 213 below.

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to strike her. Her parents-in-law, for instance, despite their authority over her, would not do so. If anything, they would try to restrain their son from beating her. Only her husband has that combination of authority and intimacy in relation to her which permits the use of physical force upon her.

But flight is not the only weapon a woman has in order to maintain her rights and privileges in her conjugal family. Once she is fairly free from the leading strings of her mother-in-law, she is the mistress of her time and energies. It is an accepted axiom of married life, which no man questions, that a wife is free to dispose of her time as she pleases, provided she does not hamper the essential economic activities of the household, or neglect her children, or remain away from home for unwarrantable periods or at times—e.g. during the Great Festivals—when all the members of the family should be together. The routine of domestic tasks, over which men have no control, is a strong line of defence against the interference of men in their wives' disposal of their time. But differences of opinion on this matter are a common cause of squabbles between husband and wife. A young woman dresses up to go to market; her husband objects, saying that other men will be paying court to her there, or that the children will be left hungry all day; she insists; and a heated argument ensues. Nine times out of ten the woman has her way. Occasionally the husband succeeds in stopping her, by persuasion or by force. It is only at sowing or harvest time, or when, for instance, preparations for an important ceremony are in hand, that a man has full control over his wife's time.

At all times a wife's freedom to arrange her work and her leisure as best suits her may subject her husband to inconvenience. If, at the end of the day, she is too preoccupied or too tired to cook, he can but grumble and go hungry. And if he annoys her she can make a point of being too busy to attend to some want of his or too tired to cook the evening meal. This, men say frankly, is one of the strongest arguments in favour of keeping on good terms with one's wife.

Tallensi regard these utilitarian rights and duties, services and attentions of husband and wife towards each other as a most important feature of marriage. But it is clear that they do not constitute the unique relationship that distinguishes the marriage tie from other social ties of the Tallensi. Thus a woman performs much the same utilitarian services as daughter in her natal home, and as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law in her conjugal home. They are but a part of the whole configuration of co-operation, mutual help, reciprocal services, etiquette, and mutual tolerance that keep the wheels of family life running smoothly. And it is clear, also, that they imply the existence of common interests that create a sense of mutual moral obligation.

This underlying bond of mutual moral obligation is the basic sanction of reciprocity and co-operation in the domestic family. In the case of

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593 husband and wife, the man is more his wife's physical and spiritual
581 protector than her lord and master. Baŋ of Zubiuŋ-Yakora and Nindɔyat
of Zubiuŋ-Kpayarayayar had a complicated dispute over an ancient
[578] cattle debt. It culminated in blows when Nindɔyat tried to lay hands on Baŋ's wife. That, declared Baŋ, he would not stand for.

581 A man is responsible for ensuring the beneficence of the ancestor
753 spirits and other mystical powers towards his wife; and that he does this
757 out of a sense of moral duty is evident when his wife gets ill. I well remember two particularly pathetic cases. Baripeta, a handsome, industrious, intelligent, and popular young man, had one young wife. Shortly after the birth of their child, she was stricken with leprosy. The Tallensi are generally prepared to admit that this disease is incurable by their magico-medical methods. They say that it is contagious to the sufferer's young children. The bodily corruption of the disease disgusts them, and they say that lepers are difficult to live with as they become bitter and vindictive. Baripeta knew all this as well as anybody else. His wife had become an economic and social burden instead of a helpmate. Yet he continued to cherish her, and, poor though he was, to try treatment after treatment for her, at the cost of many fowls and goats and pence. It is true that a jural principle was involved. As she had contracted the disease in his home under his care, he was responsible for her. He could not return her to her father, for instance. But it was plain from his behaviour and talk that he continued to care for her, with even greater consideration than usual, not out of submission to a customary jural rule but out of a feeling of immediate duty towards and concern for her.

It was the same with Omara. His senior wife fell a victim to leprosy when her eldest children had already reached adulthood. He went to great expense in trying to get her cured. Explaining this to me, he said that, firstly, a sick person's nearest relatives never give up hope of a cure, and secondly, he was her husband, therefore he must try his utmost to save her. If he gave up she would be mortally hurt and might pine away. It was his duty to her and to her children.

The Sexual Relationship as the Corner-stone of Marriage

581 The moral bond of husband and wife is founded on their sexual relationship, conceived as the means to the end of reproduction. It is this that makes the sexual relationship the corner-stone of marriage.

581 The simplest proof of the significance of the sexual relationship is the
585 fact that a marriage is not properly consummated until coitus takes place
587 between the partners. This is seen most clearly when a widow remarries. She may be given in marriage to one of her deceased husband's brothers by the head of his effective minimal lineage, or she may be claimed by her deceased husband's brother, and may acquiesce, to begin with. If
[837] she has sexual relations with her new husband she becomes his wife, whether or not the formalities of remarriage are completed. If she

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succeeds in avoiding intercourse with him she is not his wife, and may sleep with any other man without fear of being accused of adultery. Cases of this kind are common. A particularly instructive case was that of a wife whom Pal-Zəŋ inherited from his dead brother. As she was pregnant at the time, he did not attempt to sleep with her. She miscarried, but continued to put him off with excuses. The reason for this soon became apparent. An agnatic cousin ('brother' in native terminology) of Zəŋ's was living with him, who, being half blind, spent most of the day at home. This gave him the opportunity of ingratiating himself with the woman, and he became her lover. Though Zəŋ was indignant at the humiliation put upon him, and obviously burning with jealousy, he could do nothing about the affair. For it was not incest, as Zəŋ's marriage with the woman had never been consummated.

It follows from this rule that a woman cannot refuse to cohabit with her husband. It sometimes happens that a girl is given in marriage by her father to a man whom she does not like, and that she takes up this line of resistance. The husband then has the right to thrash her or to use other forms of force in order to make her yield. The story of how Baŋyɛlib consummated his first marriage is a somewhat ribald instance of this rule. The girl literally fought him off for days. Then one morning, as she was crawling out of their sleeping-room, his brother seized her by the neck and held her as in a vice, caught in the narrow doorway. She was helpless, and Baŋyɛlib, who had purposely stayed in the room, 'mounted her from behind', in the words of one of his brothers who told me the story. Another man I knew, in the same plight, sent to inform his father-in-law. The old man arrived at cockcrow next day in a towering rage and laid an ultimatum before his daughter. He was not going to eat or drink or budge from the door of her room until her husband told him that the marriage was consummated. The girl, weeping with humiliation, yielded immediately to this heartless form of third degree. Tallensi say that if a man has connexion with his wife for the first time in such circumstances she is at once impregnated—a bit of folk-lore that shows how marital cohabitation is felt to be essentially the means to procreation rather than to gratification.

Reciprocally, a man cannot refuse to cohabit with his wife. If he does, she will quarrel bitterly with him and leave him; and she will have the support of her father or guardian in this action. A polygynist must divide his sexual attentions equally among his wives, or else the neglected wives will quarrel with him and with their co-wives. Indeed, men say, somewhat cynically, that more family quarrels arise because of the jealousy (*yuur*) of co-wives over the sexual attentions of their common husband than for any other cause. Though a woman cannot prevent her husband from having a clandestine lover, she will resent it as a slight on her sexual attractions if she finds out, and make life uncomfortable for him in revenge.

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Tallensi speak of these two sins against the marriage bond with genuine horror. During my second tour in Taleland, Maankye and his wife died within a few days of each other. Men of the family told me that this was the retribution justly visited on them for having fought with stirring-stick and bow but refusing to part. Such breaches of the marital bond might conceivably provoke a man to 'blow on' his wife, but I have never heard of an actual case. More probably she would be handed over to the lineage elders, to be sent back by them to her father.

Incidentally, the prohibition against keeping a wife who wets the sleeping-mat at night obviously belongs to this class of offences against the marriage bond, though, being involuntary, it is less heinous than the others. The real mystical danger to the husband is that a black ant might crawl through the woman's urine and then sting him. To disgust at the physical fouling of the nuptial bed in this infantile manner, so out of keeping with adulthood, is added fear of the magical consequences of the sexual maladjustment represented by the condition. But here again, in the few cases I know of, the woman was returned to her father through the elders of the husband's lineage.

It should be added that a wife's refusal to allow her husband to have coitus with her on a particular occasion is not regarded as a denial of his rights. This is one of the ways in which a woman gets her own back if she is vexed with her husband. And it would be very uncouth for the man to try to force her to yield to him. 'He coaxes her, until she at last gives him the vagina (*xaŋ pɛn tiu*)', my men friends told me.

The Sexual Rights of the Husband and the Corporate Interests of his Clan

A man has exclusive sexual rights over his wife, as we have said. If any other man has relations with her this is either incestuous or adulterous, and a serious wrong against the husband himself and his effective minimal lineage, section, or clan, according to the structural relations of the husband's and the seducer's effective minimal lineage, section, or clan.

To appreciate the significance of this we must recollect that a woman marries an individual, but marries *into* a lineage and clan. Men, and even women and children, of a clan or lineage speak of the wives of its members as 'our wives (*ti pɔŋaba*)'. If a man sees the wife of a clansman trying to sneak away in flight from her husband, he will take it on himself to bring her back home by force if necessary. If a man's wife is seduced or abducted by a member of another clan, any of his clansmen will take reprisals, if they get a chance, by seducing or abducting the wife of a member of the offending clan. There were many fights in the old days, as we have learnt, between clans because the wife of one clan was abducted by a member of the other.

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613 This corporate interest of the husband's lineage and clan in his wife, implying, on the surface, a diffused 'ownership' of the woman, is most 581 precisely shown in the joint leviratic rights of clansmen.[1] It is, however, not far in the background of all the relations of a woman with her 587 husband's clansmen, individually or collectively. For it is the commonest and most commonplace expression of the corporate unity and solidarity of the agnatic descent group. And it is not an undifferentiated collective interest or right, but very clearly differentiated in accordance with the segmentation of the lineage.

581 The crux of this differentiation is the sexual relationship of husband and wife. As his sexual partner a woman is the wife of her husband in 837 a rigorous sense that distinguishes him from all his clansmen, both in relation to herself and in relation to her paternal lineage and clan. Un- 593 like the other reciprocal rights and duties of matrimony, those that pertain to sex are unconditionally binding on the spouses and strictly reserved to them. A man's authority over his wife in other respects is often shared with others—his parents, for instance. His sexual rights over her cannot be shared. In the economic management of the household a woman has some freedom of action; she has none in her sexual relationship with her husband. Nor is a husband sexually free, in the same way, for instance, as he is free to dispose of property acquired by his own efforts. Though he is nominally free to indulge in extra-marital liaisons, he can in fact only do so clandestinely and at the risk of friction with a jealous wife. Sexual relations are licit in wedlock; outside marriage they are illicit, especially for a woman; before marriage no social cognizance is taken of them if they do not involve adultery or incest. Love affairs between distant members of the same clan come into this category of tolerated illicit sex relations, hence their irrelevance to the function of sex in marriage.

848 This is a consequence of the stress Tallensi lay on legitimate parenthood, for which marriage is a *sine qua non*. Tallensi express contempt for the Gorisi who, it is notorious, often constrain a daughter to 'sit at home and bear children' to augment her father's family. Though Tallensi do not approve of a girl's bearing a child before marriage, no moral stigma attaches to her. She has no difficulty in finding a husband, if she is physically and mentally normal. Her illegitimate child (*yi-yeembii*) is welcomed by her parental family, especially if it is a daughter. For instance, Pa'anbobis has a sister, now a staid elderly woman and mother of a legitimate family, who had an illegitimate daughter in her youth. This girl was married off by Pa'anbobis's father, who was entitled to her bride-price. She bore a daughter and was then taken away from her husband because he failed to pay the bride-price. When she married again her daughter remained behind as a 'child' of the family, and Pa'anbobis will receive her bride-price. People said he was a lucky man.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

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His family had had a windfall of two daughters in half a generation and that meant eight cows.

Yet the Tallensi believe emphatically that a girl can only realize her womanhood to the full by bearing legitimate children. For this she must marry; and marriage means having only one husband at a time. It is as her husband's sexual mate that a woman is most sharply separated from her natal family; it is her husband's exclusive rights over her reproductive powers that definitively makes them husband and wife.

This proposition applies also to the husband's field of social relations. Within the region of family and kinship ties where generation differences are socially recognized, sexual relations may occur only between married partners. Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman of the family who is not his wife is incest. The Tallensi have no name for this act. They say, simply, 'It is tabooed (*de kihme*)'; and they look on it with unanimous revulsion. Translating their ideas into our cultural idiom, we should say that they regard any form of incest as an unnatural act.[1]

Incest, to a Talena, includes sex relations with a sister or daughter, that is, a woman of one's own lineage: with a mother, the wife of one's own or classificatory father; with a brother's wife; and with a son's wife. Such acts of misconduct are considered incestuous if they occur within the limits of the expanded family—that is, the family group based on the inner lineage (the narrow *dug*). The natives stress this, putting the emphasis on the fact that the narrow *dug* is the smallest lineage segment with a common ancestor shrine (*boyar*). Such acts are, also, often regarded as incestuous within the limits of the family cluster based on the medial lineage, particularly if this lineage has a narrow span.

Incest occurs occasionally in every Tale community. Such an act soon leaks out, and is remembered with contempt for many years. I have discussed such cases with many informants, and was able, also, to witness the public reaction to two cases that occurred during my field work.[2]

There are no penal sanctions against any form of incest, nor are the culprits believed to be subject to automatic mystical retribution. Incest is so incompatible with the pattern of co-operation and the structure of disciplinary and affective relations in the family that this itself serves to banish it from the field of family relationships. Though incest taboos are never deliberately inculcated, the habits, attitudes, and organization of family life (to put the native expressions into sociological language) create internal barriers against incest, in the normal person. This applies particularly to incest with a sister or daughter, whether it is a single impulsive act or a more lasting liaison. Tallensi explain that a normal

[1] A preliminary analysis of this subject was given in my paper, 'Kinship, Incest, and Exogamy in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', in *Custom is King: Essays presented to R. R. Marett*, 1936.

[2] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii.

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homestead, thrashed him soundly, and destroyed many of his personal belongings. This is typical of the anger stirred up by adultery within the clan. Such action would not be taken against a man who committed incest with a father's or brother's wife, though he might be sent to Coventry for a time. For this kind of incest is, at bottom, a question of conscience. The public reaction with regard to it is of no consequence compared with the vileness of the sin and the wrath of the ancestors.

If a man's wife is seduced by a member of another clan, this is also adultery, as has been mentioned, and a wrong against the husband's clan. If the two clans have local or structural ties, the breach must be mended by the prescribed ritual reconciliation. If they have no such ties, no redress is available to the injured husband's clan. He and his clansmen will try to 'cancel the debt (*ltrəg samər*)' by seducing the wife of a member of the clan that has wronged him, when any of them gets a chance of doing so.

A man's exclusive sexual rights over his wife are secured, also, by mystical sanctions to which the woman is subject. If she has sexual relations with any man other than her husband she commits a grave sin. It is, as the natives say, 'dirt' (*dayət*), mystical defilement. It may bring sickness or death on the woman's husband or children or even on herslf, for it is a serious affront to her husband's ancestors. As we have noted before, adultery (*pɔyamboɔn*, lit. woman-thing) in a wife is regarded with revulsion not unmixed with real dread. The woman has committed something not far short of sacrilege, for she has flouted the rights of her husband's lineage over her reproductive powers. Hence she cannot be admitted to his home again until she confesses before the shrine of the lineage ancestors, the symbolic incarnation of the lineage itself. The threat to the life of the lineage is felt to be so grave that among the Hill Talis an adulteress is forced to confess at the External Bɔyar,[1] the supreme ancestor shrine. Men do not hesitate to use the most callous third-degree methods, short of physical maltreatment, to exact a confession from a wayward wife.

Lastly, a man's wife continues to belong to him sexually after his death until his final funeral ceremonies have been made. Apart from a few ritual observances in sign of mourning, which do not embarrass her greatly, a widow is free to go about her normal life in the interval between her husband's death and his final obsequies. But she is subject to one iron taboo: she may not have sexual relations. It is a much graver sin than during her husband's lifetime, endangering not only her children and herself but her husband's spiritual status. A dead man whose wife has *kaa gaba*, broken the mourning of widowhood, as this misdemeanour is called, cannot have descendants given to him as spiritual wards, for his spiritual status is smirched. It is for this reason that, when

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii.

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765 a man dies leaving young wives without infants his funeral ceremonies
●581 are hurried on. Tallensi do not believe that young widows without
834 infants will remain chaste for long out of a sense of duty or for fear of mystical penalties. A man's widow, in short, remains his wife, sexually bound to him, as long as his social personality continues to be recognized. Death alone does not expunge a man's social personality. The management of his property, his social roles, and all his rights and responsibilities, continue to be exercised by proxy in his name after his death until his
[768] funeral ceremonies are finished; for it is by these ritual acts that his social personality is expunged. His property then passes to his heir, his social roles to his successor, and his widow is free to remarry.

The Husband's Relationship with his Affines

593 The sexual bond of husband and wife is also, as we have noticed, the
562 critical element that discriminates a woman's marital relationship with her husband from her filial relationship with her father or with anyone who takes over his social role. As we have mentioned before, the economic duties and rights of a woman in her conjugal family are not very different from those that she exercises in her natal family before marriage or if she comes to live with the latter at any time. Her jural status as a minor under her husband's or father-in-law's authority corresponds to her jural status in her father's family. It is essentially with respect to her reproductive capacity that her role and status as wife and mother are sharply separated from her role and status as daughter and sister.

This will be clearer if we look first at the general rules and conventions of a son-in-law's relations with his father-in-law's family and lineage.

602 The term *deema* (pl. *deenam*), affine, correctly used applies to wife's
562 parent and daughter's husband, and to anyone identified with them in a particular situation. It is the self-reciprocal term of address between these relatives, as well as the term of reference for them. I have heard it used as a special gesture of consideration and courtesy by a man to his brother's wife, but this is not usual. For the relationship between affines, in the Tale sense of this term, is not quite the same as that of a woman with her husband's parents and siblings. A man's affines have no authority over him. The tensions connected with common residence are absent. There are no common economic, jural, or ritual interests between affines.

602 As in all Tale social relations, differences of personality and the flexi-
606 bility of custom result in variations in the actual behaviour of affines to one another that sometimes obscure the real nature of the relationship. I have seen a man chaff his mother-in-law (*deempɔk*) in a way that would be regarded as excessively familiar by the majority of natives. In a well-established marriage one often finds great friendliness and mutual good-